THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) The exploration activities in the CBM Block BS (3)-CBM-2003/2 were initiated by ONGC after obtaining licence for the acreage on10.9.2004. 8 Core holes and 2 Test Well locations were firmed up. A smaller rig was planned for drilling core holes to reduce costs. An experienced Company, namely, M/s.MECL was engaged by ONGC for initial drilling.Due to technical problems, they failed to achieve the target. In place of M/s. MECL, M/s. Quipo, a mobile drilling rig was hired by ONGC on 8.8.2006. ONGC has completed drilling activities in the Block by 16.8.2007 within the extended period of contract.

(b) to (e) On 14th June, 2006,Principal Secretary, Energy & petrochemical Department,Goverment of Gujarat had requested for induction of third partner to expedite exploration activity and complete the minimum work programme (MWP) well in time. However, ONGC had communicated to Government of Gujarat that they have hired a mobile drilling rig to complete the ONGC has also completed the MWP within the extended time.

Use of transport gas cylinders

†1191. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has suggested/directed all the companies supplying cooking gas in the country to use cylinders;

(b) if so, the reaction of the gas producing companies thereto; and

(c) by when the supply of transparent gas cylinders to the consumers will be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Government has conveyed "in principle" approved to the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) for expanding the product line by way of introduction of composite cyclinders for marketing domestic LPG, subject to there being no subsidy element in the LPG to be marketed through these composite cylinders. To start with, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (ICO) along with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) intend to import some cylinders and do test marketing in selected cities.

Adulteration in fuel

1192. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Environmental Pollution Control Authority has directed Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) to carry out an investigation on fuel adulteration;

(b) if so, the details of the recommendations made by the CSE;

(c) whether the oil companies/Government have failed to check the rising fuel adulteration cases; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Consequent to the Supreme Court order dated 22.11.2001 in Writ Petition 13029/85, the Environmental Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority for the National Capital Region has directed Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) to carry out an investigation on fuel adulteration. The details of the recommendations made by CSE in section 9 of the Report is given in the Statement. (*See* below)

(c) and (d) Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) undertake regular and surprise inspections of Retail Outlets and also take action under Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG) and Dealership Agreements against those indulging in adulteration and malpractices. MDG provide for termination of dealership in the first instance itself for serious malpractices like adulteration, tampering of seals, and unauthorized fittings/gears in dispensing units.

In spite of above, the possibility of adulteration of petrol/diesel by some unscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out due to huge price difference between petrol/diesel and various adulterants available in the market and the easy miscibility of these products with petrol/diesel.

In order to check adulteration, the Government has taken a number of additional initiatives *viz.*, Automation of Retail Outlets, Third party certification of Retail Outlets, Monitoring of movement of tank trucks through Global Positioning System (GPS), Jan Kerosene Pariyojna (JKP), Use of Marker in Kerosene, Revision of MDG etc.

Statement

Details of the recommendations made by CSE

"Recommendations

Our investigation shows that the current product quality monitoring system is extremely weak and stems largely from weak regulations and enforcement, skewed market prices of the petroleum products and lack of accountability in the petroleum sector. Unless this is corrected the root cause of the problem cannot be eliminated. Immediate direction is needed in the operational, technical and economic areas. While there is a unanimous agreement that skewed prices are responsible for adulteration, so far no solutions have been possible for political reasons. This study clearly shows that unless we take serious steps to improve the system to prevent and check adulteration, we will not even begin to touch the profitable business of adulteration. The current system is compromised from testing methods that are not adequate to detect adulteration to penalty systems designed to let the manufacturers go scot-free. It is possible to create a library of different refinery samples of automotive fuels and possible adulterants. With the help of the standard library chromatogram it will be much easier to detect fuel adulteration.

Make oil companies accountable for the quality of fuel at the retail end

Any extent of vigilance and surveillance will be meaningless unless strict liability is imposed on the oil companies to take full responsibility for the quality of fuels they sell at their retail outlets. As of now the responsibility and penalty are all fragmented along with supply chain. Though retailers and the transporters are penalized by the oil companies if malpractices occur, the oil companies are not held accountable. To put it simply consumers

cannot sue the oil companies for adulterated fuels. Unless this is done checks and balance in the system will not work effectively to prevent malpractices at any level. The best way that consumer pressure can be intensified on the oil companies is to develop a system of public rating of the retail outlets by the name of the oil companies on a monthly basis based on an independent inspection, testing and audit of the outlet.

In a competitive market there are multiple oil companies rivaling for market share. This will become more severe with decontrol of the petroleum sector soon. In such a situation protection of brand name would be most critical for the oil companies to guard their market share. Therefore, quality based public rating of the retail outlets by the name of companies would work best in disciplining the supply chain and preventing the widespread malady.

Improve testing procedures and tighten fuel quality standards

Immediate attention should be paid to tightening the fuel quality standards and regulating some key parameters that are not done today like aromatics, olefins in petrol, and PAH in diesel. Even the broad range that is allowed under the current specifications should be adequately tightened. Tighter the net easier it is to catch dubious samples.

Develop alternative testing procedures for more accurate detection

For more accurate detection alternative testing methods and protocols should be adopted straight away and applied for surveillance."

Exodus of employees from oil companies

†1193. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:
SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of employees are leaving public sector oil companies;

(b) the number of senior and junior officers of management level who have left an important public sector unit 'Indian Oil Corporation' during last three years, category-wise alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that Indian Oil Corporation neither has any career development plan nor transport promotional policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) No, Sir. While, as is normal in any organization, some employees of public sector oil companies have left service by tendering resignation for personal reasons/better career prospects elsewhere, number of such employees is quite small compared to total strength of employees of the public sector oil companies.

(b) and (c) In so far as Indian Oil Corporation is concerned, the number of officers in the Junior, Middle and Senior Management cadres who have left during the last three completed financial years are 260,56 and 13 respectively. Indian Oil Corporation has well defined career development plan as well as a transparent promotion policy for all categories of employees and officers.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi